

'The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.'

Deuteronomy 6:4-6.

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**Theme for 2023 – The Prophecy of Zechariah**

**October 27th, 7pm**

Subject: The Open Fountain and the Smitten Shepherd (ch 13)

Speaker: Richard Monteith

**November 24th, 7pm**

Subject: The Second Coming of Christ and the

Millennial Kingdom (ch 14)

Speaker: Paul Toms

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# Watching and Waiting

LIGHT FOR PERILOUS TIMES

SCRIPTURAL

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The objects are:

1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord's return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of 'the Scripture of Truth.' 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

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## That Which Draws the Risen Saviour into our Midst

By Ivan Foster

*‘And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you’ (Luke 24:36).*

Particularly notice the opening words of this verse, ‘And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them.’ As I contemplated this statement, it occurred to me that here we have:

### What it is that Draws the Saviour into the Midst of His People

The giving witness to His resurrection drew the Saviour into the midst of the little gathering.

**1. The smallness of the gathering of disciples does not deter the Saviour coming amongst His people.** There were only ‘eleven gathered together, and them that were with them’ (verse 33), when they were joined by the two who had seen the Saviour. Many throughout the world can empathise with such numbers!

This is a comfort to many gatherings across the world in these evil times when the cause of Christ is despised and ridiculed as it has not been before in living memory.

Smallness is always a cause of concern for believers who wish ever that more of their neighbours and friends, indeed enemies, would come in under the sound of the Word of God. However that distresses the Christian, it is clear from the text that it does not in the least deter the Saviour from coming amongst such a small gathering.

**2. Our text makes clear that the subject they were speaking of was that which drew the Saviour.** The heart of the declaration was, ‘The Lord is risen indeed’ (verse 35). I believe that I can state with great certainty that nothing pleases the Lord Jesus more than when His people are declaring the truth of His resurrection. It is a central truth and is the essence of the gospel message. If this be UNTRUE then His birth, life and crucifixion are meaningless. They would be of no consequence or benefit or profit to this world. As Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:14, ‘And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.’

How precious to the Saviour is that company which believes He gained the victory over Satan, sin and death at the cross and rose again the third day from the dead! He wishes to be amongst such a company!

**3. Please note the position He took up.** He ‘stood in the midst of them.’ That means that He stood in the middle, equally near to each disciple. How precious is that fact! Preachers are often concerned that all present hear and understand God’s Word as it is preached and each one receives a blessing. We need not fear over this. The Saviour will draw near to all gathered to worship Him ‘in spirit and in truth.’

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**Please Note what it was He Immediately Said**

He said; 'Peace be unto you.' I dare say that the greatest need they had at that time was a quieting of the storm of fear and doubt that raged in their hearts and minds. Such peace is what the gospel brings to those who welcome and receive it. It was that which the angels celebrated at the birth of Christ. 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Luke 2:13-14). Peace of heart and mind, a desire for the enjoyment of peace by those around us, above all, peace with God — this is the core blessing of the gospel.

**1. Such peace comes to us from Christ.** I despair as I daily read of the tomfoolery that people engage in that they might find a quietness of mind and spirit! Fortunes are made by those who peddle what are nothing more than quack and fraudulent concoctions and delusional hocus pocus, which it is claimed will bring peace to the mind! It is clear that none of these antics work and it is for this reason, alcohol and drugs are the chief resort of a troubled and distraught world! God says, 'There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked' (Isaiah 48:22). Try as men may to disprove this, they have and will forever fail. Peace is found **ONLY** in Christ.

**2. It is conveyed to us by His Word.** He 'saith unto them.' The channel through which God conveys peace to distressed and tormented mankind is His Word! 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!' (Romans 10:15).

The name that the prophet Isaiah said belonged to the Saviour is given us in that glorious verse, so well known yet very rarely understood, 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6). Only those under His rule and members of His dominion can enjoy that peace which comes to those who believe the gospel. 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' (John 14:27). The peace of Christ, bestowed upon those who embrace the gospel, has ever been the source of comfort and assurance for God's people throughout the times of distress.

**3. It is especially bestowed in a gathering of His people.** That must not be overlooked. The words I just quoted from Luke 14:27 were spoken in that little gathering of His disciples at the last supper. That gathering broke up, as we are told in John 18:1, 'When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples.'

There are exceptions to this rule, as I myself experienced, for I was not converted in any gospel meeting but in the company of only one person and yet, I did not enter into the full peace of heart and mind that assurance of salvation brings until one week later I attended a meeting in a Free Presbyterian Church for the first time and listened to Dr Ian Paisley preach and explain the gospel. It was in that gathering I found the full peace of God's salvation.

May men and women, who seek the 'still waters' by yielding to the guidance of charlatans and tricksters, be led instead to where the truth of God is faithfully preached and those 'waters' flow.

### That Day was a Day of Rich Blessing

The disciples would never forget that day!

**1. In a most practical way the Lord gave proof of His resurrection.** ‘Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet’ (verses 39-40). That cannot be our experience but we can obtain the same measure of assurance by believing the record of these witnesses.

We enjoy peace of mind about many things to which we entrust our lives on the basis of the public testimony of others. Few of us may not understand how it is that a fully loaded airplane, perhaps weighing as much as 450 tons, can fly through the air, and yet billions of individuals have taken the word of test pilots and manufacturers that their aircraft is safe! There have been many tragic crashes resulting in the death of thousands but still very few doubt the science behind powered flight!

There has never been ANYONE who has proved that the gospel of Christ is flawed and doomed to crash and fail.

Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853), one of the principal founders of the Harvard Law School, originally set out to DISPROVE the Biblical testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was certain that a careful examination of the internal witness of the Gospels would dispel all the myths at the heart of Christianity; but this legal scholar came to the conclusion that the witnesses were reliable, and that the resurrection did in fact happen!

There have been many like Simon Greenleaf who have come to examine the resurrection of Christ with a view to exposing it as fraudulent only to go away disciples and believers.

**2. Christ gave that little gathering further evidence of His resurrection in another practical fashion.** ‘And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them’ (verses 42-43). As they had so often done before, they enjoyed a time of fellowship around a meal. In so doing He reminded them that He had told them of these events before His crucifixion. ‘And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me’ (verse 44).

### Self-inflicted Pain

What pain we inflict upon ourselves by NOT BELIEVING the Word of God! The distresses that they passed through at the time of the crucifixion and its aftermath would have been avoided had they only believed the Saviour on those occasions when He spoke to them plainly of what lay ahead for Him. The angels at the empty tomb had reminded them of His teaching of them about the cross. ‘He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise

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again' (Luke 24:6-7).

On one occasion, during a time of prayer with His disciples, the Lord Jesus said unto Peter, 'But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And He straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day' (Luke 9:20-22).

### Repeat of this sad experience

The pain caused by unbelief will again come upon the people of God through their not embracing what the Saviour has said regarding the last days! The spirit of rejection of Christ at Calvary will be seen again to an even greater measure at the approaching close of this age. Calvary was a 'localised' event, taking place without any immediate knowledge of it beyond the borders of Israel. However, a time is fast approaching when THE WORLD will manifest the spirit that gave rise to the cry of the Jews in Jerusalem, when they, 'Cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him' (Mark 15:14).

That day is pictured for us in Revelation 13. 'And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:1-8).

These things are revealed in God's Word for our learning and comfort that we might not be taken unawares by horrific events, as were the disciples at the cross! So said Paul under divine inspiration. 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope' (Romans 15:4).

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, 'But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a

thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do' (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11).

Paul was writing to comfort God's people some 2000 years ago about things that lay far in the future for them; but those things are on our doorstep and we would do well to heed what he said and comfort ourselves through his words.

When we see these things come to pass, we are not to panic and lapse into melancholy and despondency! No, we are, as the Saviour tells us, to rejoice exceedingly – 'look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh' (Luke 21:28).

The elect remnant rejoice in the truth of the resurrection of our Saviour in a simple believing manner, and not in the garish buffoonery and nonsense that is seen amongst the benighted church-goers of the apostasy. Let us be ready ourselves by believing the Holy Scriptures, for that of which the Saviour has clearly warned us in those inspired writings, will come at the end of this age.

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## The Devil and The Believer

By Alan D Toms

When a person is converted, all his relationships are changed. Conversion is a radical experience which affects every part of our being, and every aspect of our life. Fundamentally our relationship to God is reversed, which in turn reverses our relationship to the devil.

The Bible teaches that the unregenerate are in the hands of the devil and so at enmity with God. When we are born again, we are in the Hands of God and so at enmity with the devil. Every Christian was once a servant of the devil and a rebel against God; but now, on conversion, becomes a servant of God and a rebel against the devil. Therefore the devil is against every true believer. He is our enemy. It may be that your spiritual life is at such a low ebb that the devil can afford to leave you alone, but basically he is opposed to every Christian. This means two things. He has lost his rights within the Christian and his absolute power over him. He can never get the believer back, but he can do a tremendous amount to impair our relationship with God, rob us of blessing and make us ineffective in Christian service. The Bible constantly warns the Christian against the wiles of the devil. By calculated strategy, based on millenniums of



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experience, his power is directed against us, to keep to the minimum our enjoyment of our blessings in Christ. Once we have entered glory he is utterly impotent. All he can do must be done in this brief time we are here on earth.

‘We are not ignorant of his devices’ (2 Corinthians 2:11), and we must seek to counter his endeavours. We ask ourselves two questions. ‘What is he trying to do?’ and ‘How can we stop him from succeeding?’

### What is he trying to do?

He is trying to **impair our relationship with God**. He succeeded in the Garden of Eden, driving a wedge between Adam and his Maker. In Christ, we are restored, so the enemy starts again. Christians are in a stronger position, for while Adam stood in his own strength, we stand in the strength of Christ. The devil can never destroy this new relationship, but he labours continuously to weaken it: very often with great success. If he can make us doubt God’s loving care and bring us into a state of worry and fear we lose our rest and peace, and our communion which is based on trust, is spoiled. If he can persuade us to neglect Bible reading and prayer so that our spiritual life is less intimate, he will gain his point. He will exploit our busy lives and our many activities to detract from vital communion with God. Believer, the devil is working incessantly to damage that most precious gift of salvation, the restored relationship between you and God.

Secondly, he is working **to rob you of blessing**. Again the Garden of Eden provides the illustration. The serpent robbed our first parents of their blessing by offering what appeared to be more (Genesis 3:4-5), inferring that what God permitted was inadequate, that there was more for the taking. How subtly the devil tempts Christians to believe that the world can give us more. As we yield and stretch out the hand to take, like Adam, we lose the enjoyment of the blessings we have; the blessings of forgiveness; the assurance of faith; the peace of God; joy in the Holy Ghost; daily guidance; a sense of eternal security. The enjoyment of these inalienable blessings can be forfeited when we think them inadequate and seek what the world offers. We cannot lose our position in Christ, but we can certainly lose the enjoyment of our blessings.

Thirdly, the devil will seek **to ruin our service**. How successful he has been in this sphere! From the early Church to our present days, by cunning deceit and subtle distraction, he has wrought havoc in the Church’s witness to the world. Again his work is twofold. First **he will lure us into sin**. Tempting, goading, drawing or driving, he will seek our fall. It may be after weeks of temptation or in a moment of lost temper, our witness is marred. It may be our pride or our passion; in the realm of our will; our emotion or our mind; at home, at work or within the local Church; but all the time our enemy is luring us to sin. Like a gramophone with a chipped needle, or a radio with a broken speaker, the Christian who has yielded to sin, cannot proclaim the message of salvation. Praise God the Blood of Christ avails for our sin, but how our failures ruin our service. Another weapon in this warfare to reduce the effectiveness of our service



is **the division of believer from believer**. Have you ever noticed that as soon as Adam and Eve sinned they fell out? They started blaming each other. This has happened ever since. Differences spoil fellowship and Christian service is hampered. Today as never before, evangelical Christians need to stand together, but all too often we allow ourselves to be divided, and our witness suffers. Prophecy, Baptism, Holiness and the Gifts of the Spirit are just some of the subjects that may quickly divide those who are basically one in Christ. How the devil must rejoice to hear us beating our pet drums so as to drown the rest of the orchestra.

### **How can we stop him succeeding?**

So much for the devil's desires. The question now is to stop him succeeding. What are you to do? Three things:

**Reckon on him having no rights.** Ephesians 4 : 27 exhorts, 'neither give place to the devil.' He has no right to the throne of your heart. When someone wanted to take the seat in a restaurant, which I had reserved for my wife, politely but firmly I said, 'I am sorry, you cannot have that seat, it belongs to someone else.' Similarly when the devil seeks admission to the heart or mind, reckon that he has no rights. That place belongs to Someone else.

Secondly, **rely on God's provision.** 'Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand' (Ephesians 6:13). The Christians' armour outlined in this passage covers every part of him. Protected by truth and righteousness (verse 14), taking his stand on the Gospel (verse 15), his head – i.e., his mind – protected by salvation, wielding the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (verse 17), and holding the shield of faith (verse 16), he is able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One. Hallelujah for God's provision! As if that were not enough, the secret weapon of prayer is added in verse 18. Christian, rely on God's provision. 'Stand in His strength alone. The arm of flesh will fail you; ye dare not trust your own.'

Thirdly, **resist every attack.** Never run away. Never show the devil your back. 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (James 4:7). Compromise and appeasement spell defeat. They never satisfy or stop our enemy. Victory is only promised to those who resist him. Go on resisting! Never imagine that you are immune. Victory today does not guarantee victory tomorrow automatically. When the devil left Jesus after forty days temptation, it was 'for a season' (Luke 4:13). If you gained the victory yesterday and are enjoying respite today, watch out tomorrow! Many, alas, have failed here. Constant watchfulness is the price of continual victory. The enemy will return again and again, in a different guise; from a different direction; but always with the same intention to spoil your communion with God, rob you of your enjoyment of your blessings and ruin your service for the Master. Claim daily the victory in Christ. 'As surely as He overcame, and triumphed once for you: so surely you that love His Name shall triumph in Him too.'

## The Devil and the Unconverted

By Alan D Toms

It is essential that our minds should be clear on what the Bible says about the unconverted. Confusion here will mean uncertainty about our own condition and a failure to appreciate the wonder of conversion. Furthermore, unless we know what we are up against and what we are endeavouring to do, our evangelism will be ineffective and frustrating.

The Bible deals with the condition of the unconverted from two important aspects. On the one hand, human nature is condemned by God. Sin has separated the human race from God. It lives in open rebellion and is heading for Divine judgment. On the other hand, human nature is governed by the devil. Sin is not only an act against God, it is capitulation to the devil. It alienates us from God and aligns us with the devil. The unregenerate are therefore condemned by God and controlled by the devil. It is this second aspect we are to consider now. We ask first the question, 'What power has the devil over men?'

### What is his power?

The Bible gives the answer in Ephesians 2: 'in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.' In other words, before their conversion, these Ephesian Christians were governed by a supernatural influence. They were puppets, helpless victims of an outside power, despite their boasts of freedom. In verse 3 their former behaviour is mentioned, but the behaviour was due to the controlling influence. Men think they get their own way when they fulfil their own desires (verse 3) but in actual fact they are fulfilling the desires of the devil (verse 2). He allows some men to be as good as is convenient, while he stimulates others to be as bad as he requires.

Our Lord, from whose lips fell the kindest and sweetest words ever spoken, said of the unconverted of His day, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do' (John 8: 44), while John by the Spirit declares, 'The whole world lieth in the hand of the Wicked One' (1 John 5:19, see margin).

### How is this power retained?

The question is frequently asked, 'Why do men not realise the devil's grip upon them?' Why do they not see he is the influence behind personal and national problems? The answer is twofold; the devil blinds and he deceives.

'The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not' (2 Corinthians 4:4). They just cannot 'see it.' A leading astrologer said recently that he had scanned the heavens but had not seen God. Mr Kruschew declared that his astronauts had failed to find God in their space flights. Millions of lesser mortals must

confess, that they do not know God, they cannot find Him. They are spiritually blind. Blind to God, to their own need, to the wonders of salvation and to the certainty of the Day of Judgment.

The devil's second action to keep men in his grip is deception. The devil is the Master-deceiver. He deceived Eve and has been deceiving ever since. In Revelation 12:9 it is said he 'deceiveth the whole world.'

He deceives men into thinking that **licence is liberty** and so keeps them in bondage. Despite their boast of liberty, the unconverted are not free, but in terrible bondage. The will is not 'free.' Only conversion makes a man free. Jesus said, 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed' (John 8:36). 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty' (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Then the devil deceives men into thinking that **external happiness is the same as inner joy**; and so, despite the endless round of entertainment, men remain dissatisfied at heart. Non-stop amusement cannot produce lasting joy but it serves as a deception; an escape from reality.

Furthermore, men are deceived into believing that **knowledge about the universe is more important than an experience of God**; and so they remain in ignorance of the matters that are most important. Evangelical Christianity has always blazed a trail for learning and education; but let it be emphasised that knowledge itself does not satisfy. One good feature of past days was that many men and women knew God even if they did not know much about the universe. Today we know more about the world in which we live and less about God who created it. This is the devil's deception.

The devil's lie that **the material is more important than the spiritual** is too evident to need comment. Only, believer, beware lest you too be deceived.

Then the devil deceives men into believing that **to be religious is sufficient**. It is as natural for a man to want God as to want a wife. It is part of his nature. Therefore the devil sponsors false religions to create a feeling of false security. Many are satisfied with their religion and feel no need for personal, Holy Spirit conversion.

So by blinding the minds of men and deceiving them on the issues of life, the devil retains his grip upon the human race. Our next question is 'How then can the stranglehold be broken?'

### How is it broken?

Only the power of God, working within the life of the individual, can bring deliverance. No man of himself can break free, nor can our dearest friends secure our release. Only a sovereign act of Almighty God can open blind eyes and unmask the deception. In this way the sinner is 'delivered ... from the power of darkness, and ... translated into the kingdom of His dear Son' (Colossians 1:13).

This necessitates the Blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. By His death upon the cross, the Lord Jesus gave His life a ransom (1 Timothy 2:5-6), not to the devil, but to the holiness of God (Hebrews 9:14). On the basis of Calvary, the sinner is

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delivered from condemnation. By the power of the Holy Spirit convicting and converting we are brought out of the devil's grip into the dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is conversion. An act of God delivers us from Satan's bondage and brings us into the liberty of Christ's rule. It is this that makes a person a Christian. This must be the experience of men and women if they are to be truly converted. It is for this we must pray and work in our evangelism.

When the Apostle Paul was converted he realised that this not only meant his personal salvation, but it brought with it a responsibility to go to the Gentiles 'to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God' (Acts 26: 18).

Let us praise God again for the mighty thing He has done for us at Calvary, and wrought within us by the Holy Spirit; and yield our lives to Him that we may be used to bring others 'from the power of Satan unto God.'

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## Treading the Winepress

Vines and vineyards are mentioned many times in the Bible, and it seems that there was an abundance of these things in the land of Israel. The words of Jacob, when blessing his sons, would imply this. He said, 'Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes' (Genesis 49:11). Earlier in the Book of Genesis, we read of Noah planting a vineyard (9:26). The vineyards of others are also mentioned. God, through Isaiah, spoke of His people as a vineyard (chapter 5), and the Lord Jesus Christ, in His earthly ministry, spoke about vines and vineyards.

There are two books in Holy Scripture where we read of a time of 'treading the winepress.' That, of course, was done to obtain the juice of the grapes. One of the books speaking of this treading is in the Old Testament and the other is in the New Testament.

In Isaiah 63:3-4, we read, 'I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For **the day of vengeance** is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.'

In Revelation 14:19-20, we read, 'And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.'

Then, in Revelation 19:15, we read, 'And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.'

Bible students who consider these passages in their context must come to the

conclusion that they do not refer to the first coming of the Saviour to the earth, but to the time of His second advent. That must surely be 'the day of vengeance' spoken of in Isaiah.

It is true that when the Lord Jesus came to earth, born of a virgin, and took on Himself our human nature, He did suffer and die in the place of all His people, bearing their sins in His own body on the tree. His Blood was shed, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. True believers must be truly thankful for all that He endured on their behalf. They like to think much about His sufferings and death, for that is the only way any person can be saved. God's anger did fall upon His Holy Son and He bore it all on the behalf of His people, and 'by His stripes we are healed.'

However, the Scriptures quoted above refer to God's anger against sinners who have never known repentance or saving faith, those for whom no atoning Blood will answer in the solemn day of God's wrath.

Today, many may consider that treading the winepress is an old-fashioned way of extracting the juice from the grapes, but when it was carried out, it was the grapes that were squashed and not those persons treading them.

So it will be when these passages in Isaiah and The Revelation are fulfilled. It will not be the Lord Jesus who will then be the subject of God's anger but rather those who have resisted the Saviour. Sadly, there is much confusion about this as so many preachers speak as if these prophecies refer to the sufferings of the Saviour. However, there is, in these verses, a solemn warning to those who reject the truth of the Gospel as the time will come when God's judgment will be manifest

Perhaps the thinking of many has been influenced by some hymns written by men whose verses we love and appreciate. One such highly-esteemed author wrote, 'He for us the winepress trod, He endured His Father's rod.' Another wrote, 'For me He bore the wrath of God; for me He in the winepress trod.' Another wrote, 'Gone up as God – co-equal Son, with all His blood-stained garments on.' Yet another wrote, 'Cemented with a Saviour's blood, Who for His saints the winepress trod.' He also wrote, 'Shout, believer, to thy God! He has once the winepress trod.' And again, 'By His scars His toils are viewed, and His garments rolled in blood.' Also, 'Hail, Thou Bridegroom, bruised to death, who hast the winepress trod of the Almighty's burning wrath!' And one more, "'Twas through that sacred Blood He sweat, which made the Saviour's garments wet, when He the winepress trod.'

These godly men wrote many precious things that God's people delight to sing, but on this issue, they do not give an exposition which agrees with the context. It is certainly needful to emphasise, in these times, that The Day of Judgment is approaching and that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of Living God' (Hebrews 10:31). That is when there will be the treading of the winepress, and it will not be the one who treads that will be squashed.

SAT.

## Called Home

**Mr Donald Edward Matthews** was called home on 2nd May, 2023, age 93. He faithfully served for some years as the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony representative in Australia, a work which he enjoyed doing for the Lord. He loved reading, particularly those publications produced by the SGAT. He was a school teacher for many years; and amongst his interests, he loved gardening.

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## A Better Country, that is, An Heavenly (Hebrews 11:16)

Beyond this life of hopes and fears,  
Beyond this world of griefs and tears,  
There is a region fair.  
It knows no change and no decay,  
No night, but one unending day,  
And all are happy there.

Its glorious gates are closed to sin;  
Nought that defiles can enter in,  
To mar its beauty rare.  
Upon that bright eternal shore  
Earth's bitter curse is known no more  
By those who enter there.

Who shall be there? The lowly here,  
All those who serve the Lord in fear  
And on Him cast their care;  
Who, by the Holy Spirit led,  
Rejoice the narrow path to tread –  
These, these shall all be there.

Those who have learned the Lord to know,  
And follow Him where'er they go,  
So that His love they share;  
Who trust in Him once crucified;  
By faith they say, 'For me He died,'  
These, these shall all be there.

## Book Reviews

### **A Help for Using the Psalms in Personal and Family Worship.**

#### **Every Psalm for Easy Singing – Verse Only Edition.**

#### **Every Psalm for Easy Singing – Expanded Study Edition.**

These books are three volumes in one series. The books are the work of C W H Griffiths, M.A. and have been published by Pearl Publications ([www.pearlpublications.co.uk](http://www.pearlpublications.co.uk)). The purpose of this set of books is to encourage the singing of psalms in personal worship, family worship, and worship in the assembly of believers. Mr Griffiths has divided the whole Book of Psalms into 365 portions, thus giving one portion upon which readers can meditate each day of the year. The first book (A Help for Using the Psalms) appears truly to be very helpful and would be a useful acquisition for all our readers. It gives a short exposition of one portion for every day and, in practice, serves as a unique and sound miniature commentary. Many psalms are not understood by Christians generally so these pages are exceedingly useful. They could be studied in conjunction with Mr Newton's 'Dark Sayings upon the Harp' (still obtainable from ourselves).

The main content of the second volume (Verse Only Edition) is a translation by Mr Griffiths of all one hundred and fifty psalms. He has sought to simplify psalm-singing by translating every psalm into the metre known as '10s' (each verse having four lines, all having ten syllables). Music for tunes in this metre is supplied at the end of the book.

The third volume (Expanded Study Edition) again gives the psalms, with tunes, in the same metrical form but there are many useful explanatory notes added, which are good and interesting.

Mr Griffiths ably sets forth the blessings of using psalms for worship and we are sure that believers who do not accept exclusive psalmody would agree that there is great blessing in praising God by singing psalms.

We are somewhat disappointed however, that the plural pronoun has been used for addressing God throughout the translation. Appendix 8 in the first volume (The 'Help') does mention archaic words but in the interest of accuracy we would consider that singular pronouns should have been adhered to where they occur. Likewise, we would like to have seen subject and object shown separately in the use of pronouns.

It is interesting that the learned William de Burgh, D.D., in the introduction to his excellent commentary of the Book of Psalms, seems not to favour any new translation – and his work was produced in 1860, prior to the appearance of the Revised Version and certainly before more recent efforts.

All three books are published in hardback, paperback, and EBook.



## WATCHING AND WAITING

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**False Witnesses:** ‘One day a Seventh Day Adventist called at my door, and tried to convert me to his faith. I asked him where the Jews came in according to his understanding of Scripture. He turned over the S.D.A. book which he carried and found the page where Matthew 23:38 was quoted. Then he said that ‘desolate’ was Christ’s last word to the Jewish people. I said, ‘But what about verse 39?’ He turned to the place in his book where this verse occurred and said, ‘That is the church.’ I pointed out that verse 39 begins, ‘For I say unto you’ – meaning the people our Lord was speaking to in verse 38, and told him that he was handling the Word of God deceitfully; for ‘what God hath joined together, let no man seek to put asunder.’ On another occasion a ‘Jehovah’s Witness’ knocked at the door, and I told him that he was not a Jehovah’s Witness. The Jews are called in Isaiah 43 to be Jehovah’s witnesses. Today they are negative witnesses to the truth of Jehovah, but at our Lord’s Second Advent they are to become His positive witnesses to the whole world. To this he replied that ‘desolate’ is Christ’s last word to the Jews in Matthew 23:38. I asked him about verse 39, and he said that this verse is spoken to the ‘spiritual Israel.’ When I challenged him to show me where Scripture uses the expression ‘spiritual Israel’ he was silent. Both these men were teaching that God has cast away His people Israel – the Jews – and had taken to Himself instead the Church. (*Taken from the booklet, ‘Has God Cast the Jews Away?’ by Herman Newmark*).

**Subscription Forms:** When sending the last issue of the year, we usually include a subscription form with the magazine. We know that many of our readers have busy lives and do not find it easy to write letters, and the form is accordingly included for the use of such. Some friends have already sent, but if this is the case, the form can be used at a later date. We would again express our thanks to the many friends who give so generously to the Lord’s work through the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony.

**S.G.A.T. Meetings:** Arrangements have been made, God willing, for meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony to be held in 2024, and the theme for the year to be ‘Romans 9 - 11.’ This is an important section of the Book of Romans and we trust that friends will be interested in these studies, and come to our meetings, which we expect to hold on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Spring Conference is in April and the Autumn Conference in September, when we have afternoon meetings at 4.p.m. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening meetings are at 7.p.m. The dates proposed for the meetings are January 26, February 23, March 22, April 26 (conference), May 24, June 28, July 26, September 27 (conference), October 25, and November 22. Please insert the details in your diary and arrange to be present, and bring others with you.